



PRESS RELEASE

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HONDURAN WOMAN SENTENCED TO TEN YEARS FOR HOLDING ALIENS FOR RANSOM

PHOENIX –The U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Arizona announced that on October 6, 2004, Besy Arely Maldonado-Perez, DOB 6/23/75, of Honduras, was sentenced to 121 months in prison to be followed by 60 months supervised release by U.S. District Judge Stephen M. McNamee in Phoenix. Maldonado-Perez was found guilty on May 27, 2004, after a three-day jury trial, of Conspiring to Take Illegal Aliens Hostage. Maldonado-Perez was also found guilty of Harboring and Conspiring to Harbor Illegal Aliens, and the sentences on those counts will run concurrent with the 10 years for the hostage-taking conviction.

The evidence at trial showed that on March 24, 2003, officers from the Phoenix Police Department and agents from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement found 22 illegal aliens being held in a dirty, foul-smelling and crowded one-bedroom apartment on McDowell Road in Phoenix. During a search warrant agents found a disassembled rifle, spent shell casings and other unspent ammunition.

Five men residing at the apartment were guarding the aliens, and all previously pleaded guilty to Conspiracy to Take Hostages and/or Conspiracy to Harbor Aliens. The evidence

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showed that upon arrival at the apartment, the guards took any money the aliens had in their possession to credit against their smuggling debt. Guns were fired within the apartment. The aliens were forced to stay at the apartment until family members sent the smuggling fee through Western Union and provided the access code for retrieval of the fee.

The evidence at trial showed that Maldonado-Perez went to the apartment to speak with the guards and the aliens and to pick up the access codes to retrieve money from Western Union. After their arrest, the guards together called defendant from jail and she promised to send money to their jail accounts.

The investigation in this case was conducted by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the Phoenix Police Department.

The prosecution was handled by Camille Bibles and Gary Restaino, Assistant U.S. Attorneys, District of Arizona, Phoenix.

CASE NUMBER: CR-03-1064-PHX-SMM
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